



FAX NEWS

Public Affairs Section
United States Embassy

For more information please contact: Phone: 216-8122, Fax: 216-8622, Av. Arce 2780

21

La Paz, July 29, 2005

President Bush, U.S. Trade Chief Applaud House Passage of CAFTA

Trade pact will help Western Hemisphere democracies succeed, Bush says

President Bush says the July 28 approval by the House of Representatives of a U.S. free-trade agreement with Central America and the Dominican Republic represents a "commitment of freedom-loving nations to advance peace and prosperity throughout the Western Hemisphere."

In a July 28 statement, Bush said the United States has a "moral obligation and a vital national security interest in helping the democracies of Central America and the Dominican Republic succeed," and that the agreement, known as CAFTA-DR, furthers that goal.

The Senate approved the legislation on June 30; House approval came in the early hours on July 28. The president said he looked forward to signing the bill into law.

U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman said in a July 27 statement that the trade agreement will create jobs and economic growth in the United States and "promote democracy, prosperity and hope in the Central American region."

Portman said passage of the legislation "sends a powerful signal to the region and the world that the United States will continue to lead in opening markets and leveling the playing field" regarding trade.

For more information on U.S. trade policies in the region, see ["The Americas - Regional Trade."](#)

Following is the text of President Bush's statement, followed by Portman's statement:

(begin Bush statement)

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
July 28, 2005

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I am proud that the House of Representatives has acted to advance America's economic and national security interests by passing the CAFTA-DR agreement. CAFTA helps ensure that free trade is fair trade. By lowering trade barriers to American goods in Central American markets to a level now enjoyed by their goods in the U.S., this agreement will level the playing field and help American workers, farmers, and small businesses. The agreement is more than a trade bill; it is a commitment of freedom-loving nations to advance peace and prosperity throughout the Western hemisphere. We have a moral obligation and a vital national security interest in helping the democracies of Central America and the Dominican Republic succeed, and CAFTA furthers that goal. I look forward to signing this important legislation into law.

(end Bush statement)

(begin Portman statement)

Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
July 27, 2005

Statement of USTR Rob Portman on House Passage of CAFTA-DR

Tonight is an historic night for American leadership on free and fair trade.

House passage of CAFTA-DR will create jobs and economic growth here at home and promote democracy, prosperity and hope in the Central American region. This win sends a powerful signal to the region and the world that the United States will continue to lead in opening markets and leveling the playing field.

The Bush Administration has worked with Congress to pass free trade agreements with ten countries since passage of Trade Promotion Authority. Each opens markets to U.S. exports and creates U.S. jobs.

In the drive to pass CAFTA-DR, I've worked closely with Members on both sides of the aisle.

With CAFTA-DR behind us, and given the large bipartisan support for other elements of the President's trade agenda, I call on both supporters and opponents to move ahead and work together to continue to open markets and expand prosperity. I pledge to do all I can to continue our efforts to listen and address Members' concerns on trade.

I thank Speaker Dennis Hastert, the Republican trade team, including Majority Leader Tom DeLay, Majority Whip Roy Blunt, and Chairman Bill Thomas. I very much appreciate the input and support from Democrats such as Representatives Jefferson, and Moran. Great credit is also due to the Senate, which has already passed CAFTA-DR.

I want to thank my colleagues in the Cabinet, particularly Secretaries Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary Mike Johanns, and Secretary Condoleezza Rice, for their effective support.

And I commend President Bush, for having the bold vision to extend the hand of economic friendship to our Central American neighbors, and for giving me the opportunity to lead his trade team.

The drive to open markets for U.S. exports continues, and Thursday I head off to Geneva where much work remains to keep the WTO Doha talks on track."

(end Portman statement)